filling up of vacancies of judicial officers in the District Courts and the resolution taken to implement the above scheme in the meeting of Law Secretaries and Home Secretaries.

The proposed 1734 Fast Track Courts arc expected to dispose of 14 sessions cases or 20 to 25 other criminal/civil cases per month by the year 2005 which works to about 20 lakh cases by the year, 2005. The Central Government has been periodically interacting with the State Governments and High Courts with regard to setting up the required number of Fast Track Courts and the disposal of cases by them as envisaged by the Eleventh Finance Commission.

The Central Government has also been addressing the State Governments/ UT Administrations from time to time, to fill up the vacant posts of judicial officers, including consequential vacancies due to creation of Fast Track Courts with the utmost expediency.

(c) The Government has endeavoured constantly to bring about improvements in the functioning of courts with a view to simplifying procedures and delivering cost effective and speedy justice. The Government have also been constantly reviewing the accumulation of arrears in courts. Besides increasing the judge strength from time to time, the Government has also set up/ encouraged alternative modes of disposal including conciliation, mediation and arbitration. Special tribunals like Central Administrative Tribunal, State Administrative Tribunals, Income Tax Appellate Tribunals, Labour Courts, Consumer Courts, etc. have been set up to expedite disposal of cases. Information Technology is being used in generation of causelists, providing information to the litigants/advocates, etc. for speedy disposal of cases. Various steps have also been taken by the courts, like grouping of cases involving common questions of law, constitution of specialised benches and organising Lok Adalats at regular intervals, etc.

World Bank suggestion on Tobacco

*289. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Bank Economists have suggested that money saved on tobacco by banning its use altogether, if utilized on the goods, will create more jobs than those displaced;

(b) whether it is a fact that according to them, patients spend Rs. 25,000 crore in a year on their treatment of tobacco related diseases and thus Government revenue by way of taxes is hardly Rs. 6000 crore; and

(c) the steps Government propose to lake to make the tobacco ban more effective ?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C. P. THAKUR): (a) to (c) Studies conducted for the World Bank's Report of 1999 "Curbing the Epidemic: Governments and the Economics of Tobacco Control" indicated that most countries would see no net job losses, and that a few would see net gains, if tobacco consumption fell. Money that smokers once spent on cigarette would instead be spent on other goods and services, generating other jobs to replace any that will be lost from the tobacco industry-According to studies conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the cost of management of major tobacco related diseases was Rs. 27761.10 crore in 1999. As informed by the Tobacco Board, total excise duty earned on cigarettes and beedis was Rs. 5550 crore in 1998-99.

A comprehensive Bill, namely, "The Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Bill, 2001" for discouraging use of tobacco products, was introduced by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in the Rajya Sabha on 7-3-2001, which was referred to the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development of the Rajya Sabha for examination and report. The said Committee has submitted its report to the Rajya Sabha on 5-12-2001.

Artificial heart valve

†*290. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian scientists have developed the artificial heart valve;

(b) if so, whether it has been tested and found fit;

(c) if so, the estimated cost of the developed artificial heart valve in the country; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.